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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: SAUDI MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ISSUES OFFICIAL
STATEMENT REVEALING SUICIDE BOMBER'S IDENTITY AND DETAILS
OF ATTACK

REF: A. RIYADH 1126
[B](#). RIYADH 1110
[C](#). RIYADH 1121

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SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) The Saudi Ministry of Interior issued an official statement naming Abdullah bin Hassan bin Talea Asiri the perpetrator of the failed August 27 assassination attempt against Assistant Interior Minister Mohammed bin Naif (MbN). According to the statement, Asiri said he wanted to convey a message to MbN from a Saudi woman and her two children who had left the Kingdom illegally and without the knowledge of the children's guardian, as well as a message from a group of Saudis living in terrible conditions, who wanted to return home after "regretting their misguided actions" and sought MbN's amnesty against legal action. The statement contains quotes from the telephone call between MbN and Asiri. Detailed statements regarding the assassination attempt and the phone calls were widely disseminated on Government-run Saudi TV and all Arabic-language papers. End summary.

PUBLIC CONFIRMATION OF IDENTITY, DETAILS

[1](#)2. (U) Government-run Saudi TV broadcast a detailed statement on the assassination attempt on Assistant Interior Minister Mohammed bin Naif (MbN), including a telephone call between the prince and the assassin, Yemen-based Saudi militant Abdullah bin Hassan Talea Asiri, whose identity was publicly confirmed in an official statement from the Saudi Ministry of Interior. In the telephone conversation, MbN assured his attacker that he would arrange a private meeting for him to turn himself in and assured him there would be no repercussions, provided he had committed no crime. The video tape showed the wreckage of the receiving room where the attack took place. Saudi TV and Arabic-language dailies carried graphic coverage of Asiri's corpse after the explosion, showing his face intact and clearly identifiable and the remainder of his body torn to pieces and disemboweled, with an arm blown off that had landed on a ceiling tile. Press coverage observes: "But MbN was only lightly injured." The Interior Ministry profiled Asiri as a 24-year old militant born in Riyadh who was recruited by an Al-Qaeda cell whose goals included assassinations and the targeting of oil installations in the Kingdom. Asiri reportedly received self-defense training and military training, including the use of mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and Sam7s..

[1](#)3. (U) The Ministry of the Interior statement as well as local press and Saudi television report Asiri blew himself up while MbN was on the phone reassuring another terrorist in

Yemen it would be safe to return home and expressing concern for families of those who had gone to Yemen. Asiri had gotten in touch with authorities to turn himself into MbN, saying he wanted to convey a message from a Saudi woman and her two children who had left the Kingdom illegally and without the knowledge of the children's guardian, as well as a message from a group of Saudis living in terrible conditions, who wanted to return home after "regretting their misguided actions" and sought MbN's amnesty against legal action. According to the statement, Asiri asked MbN to dispatch a special plane so that he could speak to the misguided youth from MbN's office to reassure them. Asiri was then brought to MbN's Jeddah residence after Taraweeh prayers. While at the residence in a receiving hall, Asiri asked MbN to provide his personal assurances via telephone to a group of Saudi militants who had fled to Yemen following the anti-terror campaign, saying they wanted to surrender as well and were seeking safe passage from MbN. During the conversation, the explosion took place leading to the death of Asiri.

OPEN DOOR POLICY, MORE REHABILITATION CENTERS

¶4. (U) The Ministry of the Interior has stated that the attempt against MbN will not change the Kingdom's "Open Door" policy (Reftel A). The Ministry urged terrorists who remain at large abroad to surrender themselves and has plans to open five more rehabilitation centers in the Kingdom, according to a televised Al-Arabiya report. No additional details about the rehabilitation centers are available at this time. The SAG reiterated its determination to root out terror and the issue was discussed at the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers, which is chaired by King Abdullah.

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FEAR OF ATTACKS

¶5. (U) Meanwhile, the SAG is tightening security and is extra vigilant, fearing new attacks. An intensive search for five gunmen who fired at two security guards at a checkpoint in Samakh, in the southern region of Bisha, has ensued, according to the Saudi Gazette. The security guards were injured and the five gunmen who fired at them sped away in a Land Cruiser in the direction of Khamees Mushayt City. The incident received little coverage in the Saudi press, but papers of neighboring countries provided more details.

¶6. (U) Yesterday, security forces arrested three suspected militants in their hideout in Madina. Ministry of Interior spokesman, General Mansour Al Turki, said the militants surrendered without resistance when the security forces raided the house. None of the individuals were on the most wanted list.

¶7. (U) An August 30 Reuters wire story out of Khobar reported security is also being tightened at oil facilities, such as Abqaiq, the world's biggest oil processing plant. Abqaiq was the first Saudi oil target since Al Qaeda launched attacks aimed at toppling the SAG's pro-Western monarchy in 2003.

ERDMAN